(c. 12 km WSW of Antigua), 18 Aug & 1 Dec 1985, at Alotenango (c. 13 km SW of Antigua), 27 Nov 1985, and at Santa María de Jesús (c. 10 km SSE of Antigua), 23 Jan 1988. These are the first records for Dpto. Sacatepéquez. On 22 Nov 1981, observed along the Pacific coast at Puerto de Iztapa, the first record for Dpto. Escuintla and the Pacific lowland of Guatemala.

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Addresses: Dr P. W. Wendelken, P.O. Box 26, Marietta, Ohio 45750, U.S.A.; Dr R. F. Martin, Texas Memorial Museum and Department of Zoology, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78705, USA.

The mangrove reed warblers of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden coasts, with description of a new subspecies of the African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*

by J. S. Ash, D. J. Pearson, G. Nikolaus and P. R. Colston

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On 26 January 1952 K. D. Smith collected what he believed to be a Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* from a population singing in coastal

mangroves at Zula (15°15′N, 39°42′E), (Eritrea), Ethiopia, and which, to judge from the enlarged testes of the specimen, was assumed to be breeding there. On the basis of its rather short and rounded wing this bird was subsequently re-identified as a Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum* (Williamson 1963, Smith 1964). The specimen was further discussed by Fry *et al.* (1974), and together with birds from Senegal and Lake Chad and a March specimen from Tibesti, it was considered to be representative of populations intermediate between the African Reed Warbler *A. baeticatus cinnamomeus* and Palaearctic *A. dumetorum*.

The Lake Chad birds were placed in a new taxon *A. baeticatus hopsoni* (Fry *et al.* 1974) and those of Senegal were subsequently named *A. b. guiersi* (Colston & Morel 1982). The Tibesti bird, which we have re-examined, appears to be a short-winged *A. scirpaceus*.

The taxonomy and affinities of the African Reed Warbler have been a subject of some controversy over the past 15 years. Fry *et al.* (1974) and Fry & Ferguson-Lees (1977) argued that *A. baeticatus*, or at least some of its forms, should be treated as conspecific with *A. dumetorum*. This has been rejected by, among others, Devillers & Dowsett-Lemaire (1978) and Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1987), who stress instead the close vocal and other similarities of *A. baeticatus* and *A. scirpaceus*. In fact, the last-named authors suggest that *baeticatus* and *scirpaceus* are conspecific. Whilst we agree that these 2 are closely related, we adhere to the 2 specific names in this paper. Clancey (1975) proposed that the smaller, more rufous coloured birds of inland eastern and central Africa be treated as a separate species *A. cinnamomeus*, but the justification for this is questionable (*vide* e.g. Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1987) and we here treat *cinnamomeus* as a race of *A. baeticatus*.

Populations referrable to *cinnamomeus* which extended the known range of this race north and northeast were found in Niger (Devillers & Dowsett-Lemaire 1978), central Ethiopia (Ash 1973) and Somalia (Ash in press), while birds found by Wilkinson & Aidley (1983) in northern Nigeria were considered to be intermediate between *cinnamomeus* and *hopsoni*.

Meanwhile there have also been further discoveries of birds resembling the Zula specimen, all from mangroves on the coasts of Ethiopia (Eritrea), Sudan, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, and North Yemen (for all known records of *A. baeticatus* from Ethiopia, Somalia, coastal Sudan and the Arabian peninsula see Appendix 1). In December 1972 J.S.A. found birds singing on Scek Said Is (15°36′N, 39°28′E), Ethiopia, where Brother Edmund Johnson netted 2 examples and collected one specimen on 7 January 1976 (Ash 1977, Johnson 1976). Prompted by these findings G.N. searched for and found singing birds during early March of the same year near Suakin (19°05′N, 37°20′E) on the Sudan coast, and collected a series of 10 moderately worn birds, 8 of which are now housed at the Alexander Koenig Museum, Bonn, and 2, together with the Scek Said bird, at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. G.N. collected 4 more birds at Suakin in early August 1981, 2 in fresh plumage being considered to be young birds, whilst one worn and one moulting specimen were clearly adults. Three of these 4 birds were quite fat. These 4, together with 3 more specimens taken by G.N. in March 1983, and 2 nests collected in

1982 and 1983 (Appendix 2) are housed at Stuttgart Museum (Nikolaus 1984, 1987; Nikolaus & Backhurst 1982).

In Somalia, Clarke (1985) collected, but did not preserve, an *Acrocephalus* in mangroves at Zeila (11°21′N, 43°28′E) on 20 May 1958, which was almost certainly the same taxon as the birds from Alula (see below). On 10 May 1979 at least 2 birds were heard by J.S.A. singing in mangroves at Saad-al-Din Is (11°27′N, 43°28′E) which sounded just like the Scek Said Is birds in Ethiopia (Ash 1983). Then in early May 1980 similar birds were singing in mangroves at Alula (11°58′N, 50°15′E). Two adults were collected and confirmed as the typical mangrove form (J. S. Ash & J. E. Miskell). A further mangrove bird was seen by J.S.A. nearby at Garas Wadi (11°16′N, 49°02′E) in the same month.

Two specimens, inseparable from those from the Sudan coast, were collected by B. S. Meadows from birds singing in mangroves at Yanbu Al-Sinaiyah (23°09′N, 38°02′E), 350 km north of Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, on 17 March 1986, the 2 skins being now in the British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH), Tring, U.K. In 1987 an adult and juvenile were netted in mangroves much further south, at Shuqaia (17°45′N, 41°55′E), by M. K. Jennings and H. Felemban, who also saw others with newly fledged juveniles in mangroves nearby. One seen well in mangroves by M. K. Evans at Al'Urj (15°06′N, 42°52′E) in North Yemen on 10 June 1986 agreed with the description of the mangrove birds on the west side of the Red Sea.

These Red Sea mangrove reed warblers certainly appear to be closely allied to *A. baeticatus*, and their song is of a typical *baeticatus/scirpaceus* character. However, they appear to be more distinctive than any of the other *baeticatus* populations of northern Africa. In wing structure they are very similar to both *A. dumetorum* and *A. agricola*; in particular, many key out as *agricola* and even one as experienced as K. Williamson was led to believe that the Zula bird was actually *dumetorum*. Plumage colouration is incorrect however for both *dumetorum* and *agricola*, bill shape is wrong for *agricola* (which also has a relatively longer tail) and, most significantly, the song is very different from that of *dumetorum*. Both *agricola* and *dumetorum* are probably monotypic.

We describe the mangrove taxon here as a race of *baeticatus*:

Acrocephalus baeticatus avicenniae, subsp. nov.

Type. Male adult with testes enlarged, Zula (15°15′N, 39°42′E), Eritrea, Ethiopia, 26 January 1952. Collected in a mangrove swamp near Zula by K. D. Smith. In the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), Tring. Registration number 1952–25–23.

Description and diagnosis. Differs from *A. b. cinnamomeus* in being olive-brown above, with rusty tinge confined to rump and upper tail coverts, but lacking on wing feathers; slightly paler on head and mantle. Worn birds are paler with a greyish cast above. Supercilium creamy white. Almost uniform creamy white below with only a slight buff suffusion on the flanks and thighs, in contrast to the deep rich buff on the breast, flanks and under tail coverts typical of *A. b. cinnamomeus*. Under wing coverts creamy white. Wing usually longer than in *cinnamomeus*

TABLE 1
Measurements (in mm) of 2 races of *Acrocephalus baeticatus*

		n	*A. b. avicenniae*	n	*A. b. cinnamomeus**
Wing	♂	(10)	57–61 (59.0±1.2)	(14)	53–56 (54.7±1.2)
	♀	(11)	55–61 (58.2±0.9)	(5)	53–56 (54.8±1.1)
Tail	♂	(8)	47–50 (47.0±1.4)	(10)	43–47 (44.7±1.5)
	♀	(9)	44–48 (46.1±1.3)	(3)	43, 44, 45
Tarsus	♂	(8)	20–21.5 (20.9±0.5)	(10)	21.5–23 (22.1±0.5)
	♀	(9)	20–21.5 (20.7±0.5)	(3)	21, 21, 22
Bill (skull)	♂	(8)	15.5–17 (16.4±0.6)	(14)	15.5–17.5 (16.7±0.6)
	♀	(9)	15.5–17 (16.1±0.5)	(5)	16.5–17.0 (16.8±0.3)
2nd primary tip		(19)	Most = tips p6/7 (one = 7/8; two = 5/6)	(18)	Most = tips p7/9 (two = 9/10; none above p7)
10th primary shortfall		(19)	7.5–10 (9.3±0.5)	(16)	6–9 (7.3±0.9)
Hind claw		(6)	5–6	(15)	6.5–7.5
Weight		(20)	7–10.5 g (8.0±1.1)	(17)	6.2–10.6 g (8.0±1.0)

*These include all the BMNH specimens from Sudan and Chad (10) and Tanzania (4, of which 2 are labelled wrongly as *suahelicus*), plus the Smithsonian specimens from Ethiopia (4) and Somalia (3).

and rather more pointed (greater tenth primary shortfall, and the second primary falling nearer the wing tip); tarsus shorter (Table 1).

Distribution. Mangroves on the Red Sea coasts of Ethiopia (Eritrea), Sudan, Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, and the Gulf of Aden coast of Somalia.

Measurements (in mm). *Type*: wing flattened 59, tail 48, tarsus 21, bill (culmen to skull) 16.5, hind claw 5; measured ascendantly, 2nd primary falls between 6th and 7th; 10th primary shortfall (distance from tip of 10th primary to wingtip on closed wing) 9 mm. *Other specimens*: for a series of 19 (10♂♂, 9♀♀), measurements are compared with those of NE African *cinnamomeus* in Table 1.

Museum material examined (in addition to the type). Two Saudi Arabian specimens at BMNH (Reg. Nos. 1986–1–1 and 1986–1–2); 5 specimens – one from Scek Said Is and 2 each from Suakin and Alula – on loan from the Smithsonian Institution (Reg. Nos. AMNH 569770, 570439, 570440, 571274, 571366); 8 skins in the Alexander Koenig Museum, Bonn; and 5 skins in Stuttgart Museum, together with all holdings of *A. baeticatus* at BMNH and 7 *A. b. cinnamomeus* collected by J.S.A. in central Ethiopia and Somalia on loan from the Smithsonian Institution.

Breeding and moult. Records of song all fall between January and May, which presumably includes the breeding season. This is borne out by the state of gonadal development, as well developed testes were present in one male at Zula in January and in 4 at Suakin in March; 4 females were in breeding condition at Suakin in March, and one nearly so at Alula in May – the latter probably regressing. Moult would seem to occur between about July and November, for the two January specimens, though fairly fresh, appear to have moulted at least 2 months previously; March birds are more faded and moderately worn, May birds are very worn, while of the 2 August adults, one was moulting and the other was very worn. Whereas all birds caught at Suakin in March were lean, 3 of the 4 caught in August were rated Fat 3 (*vide* Pearson & Backhurst 1976). This suggests that the population migrated after breeding, and in fact no

birds have been recorded on the Sudan coast during September–November.

Etymology. The bird is named after *Avicennia maritima*, the predominant species in the mangrove habitat in which it has been found.

Comparison with other forms of A. baeticatus *and* A. scirpaceus. *A. b. avicenniae* is paler above than other races of *A. baeticatus*, including *hallae* from southwestern Africa and *guiersi* from Senegal. *A. b. guiersi* has a similar restriction of warm colouration above, but is slightly darker brown on the head and mantle. Although the type was originally identified as a Reed Warbler *A. s. scirpaceus*, the upperparts of *avicenniae* in fact closely match those of the eastern *A. s. fuscus*. The creamy wash below and the very pale flanks differentiate *avicenniae* from other races of *baeticatus*. The other African Reed Warbler known to frequent mangroves, perhaps exclusively, is *A. b. suahelicus* of the East African coast. This is a rather larger bird than *avicenniae* with a bigger bill, and is much darker and more richly coloured above and below.

The wing of *avicenniae* is longer and less blunt than that of central and eastern African *cinnamomeus*. This is a tendency also shown by West African *guiersi* and *hopsoni* on the one hand, and by southern African nominate *baeticatus* and *hallae*, which are known to migrate, on the other. Rarely, in any of these African Reed Warblers, however, is the more pointed wingtip of *A. scirpaceus* approached. The bill of *avicenniae* is relatively small; the rather slender looking legs and toes and small claws are more apparent in the live bird in the hand than can be demonstrated by the measurements obtained. The different foot structure is presumably a reflection of the bird's mangrove habitat; most other races of *baeticatus* inhabit reeds, swamps and tall grasses to a large extent. *A. b. cinnamomeus* in southern Somalia is confined to the lowest parts of very dense and high stands of *Typha* growing in water.

The pallid underparts, small feet and general structure and wing formula suggest in *avicenniae* an approach greater than that in other African Reed Warbler races to the Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*. However, its rufous tinged rump, its short first primary, more rounded tail, and a lack of tarsal scaling, as well as its song, indicate its affinities with *baeticatus* and *scirpaceus*. Whether it warrants separate status as an endemic mangrove species will be determined by further observations of its behaviour and breeding, and song recordings.

Thus, in summary, we recognise *A. baeticatus* as a polytypic species in Africa and Arabia, which does not seem to have a long-distance migration, has very close affinities with *A. scirpaceus*, and has a fragmented distribution with a number of local populations, some of which are distinct.

The discovery of *A. b. avicenniae* on the eastern coast of the Red Sea adds the species to the avifauna of Saudi Arabia and North Yemen, which are sites just outside the border of the Palaearctic as defined by Cramp (1988).

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Addresses: Dr J. S. Ash, Division of Birds, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, U.S.A. (present address: Godshill Wood, Fordingbridge, Hants SP6 2LR, U.K.); Dr D. J. Pearson, Dept of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya; Gerhard Nikolaus, Bosenbüttel 4, 2859 Spieka, West Germany; P. R. Colston, Sub-department of Ornithology, British Museum (Natural History), Tring, Herts HP23 6AP, U.K.

Appendix 1. Records of *Acrocephalus baeticatus* in Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia and North Yemen

Ref.	Date	Locality	Numbers	Reference	Museum	Subsp.
ETHIOPIA						
a*	iv.1870	Massawa, Eritrea	Not rare	Antinori & Salvadori 1873	G?	b
b	26.i.1952	Zula, Eritrea	Ad ♂ coll.	Smith 1964	BM	b
c	22.iv.1970	Bahadu	♀ coll	Ash 1973	BM	a
d	13.iii.1971	Koka	♂ coll.	Ash 1973	SI	a
e	3 & 7.v.1971	Bahadu	One netted	Ash 1973	—	a
f	6.v.1971	Bahadu	One netted	Ash 1973	—	a
g	23.xi.1971	Bahadu	One netted	Ash 1973	—	a
h	27.iii. & 4.iv.1972	Koka	One netted	Ash 1973	—	a
i	2.iv.1972	Koka	One netted	Ash 1973	—	a
j	25.xii.1972	Gambela	One coll.	Kumerloeve 1974	Bonn	?
k	28.xii.1972	Scek Said Is	5+ seen	Ash 1977	—	b
l	25–26.iii.1974	32 km NE of Bonga	2 netted	Ash 1977 (Nikolaus)	?	a
m	20.iv.1975	Gambela	1 netted	Ash 1977	SI	a
n	1–5.v.1975	Tendaho	1 seen	A. Vittery *in litt.*	—	?
o	2.v.1975	3 km ex Tendaho	1 seen	A. Vittery *in litt.*	—	?
p	28.v.1975	Koka	One netted	Ash 1977	—	a
q	20.ix.1975	Koka	One netted	Ash pers. obs.	—	a
r	22.ix.1975	Koka	One netted	Ash pers. obs.	—	a
s	7.i.1976	Scek Said Is	Two netted	Ash 1977 (E. Johnson)	SI (1)	b
t	2.iv.1976	Gilo River	Netted	Dr S. J. Tyler *in litt*	—	a
u	28.iii–13.iv.1976	Ubela River	Netted	Dr S. J. Tyler *in litt*	—	a
v	21.iv.1976	Koka	One netted	Ash pers. obs.	SI	a
w	15.ii.1977	Aseita	♂ coll.	Ash pers. obs.	SI	a
SOMALIA						
a	10.i.1900	Zeila	Ad ♂ coll.	Erlanger 1905; see Hilgert 1908	?	?
b	29.v.1958	Zeila	One coll.	Clarke 1985	—	b
c	31.iii.1979	Dannow	♀ coll.	Ash pers. obs.	BM	a
d	1.iv.1979	Dannow	3♂♂ coll.	Ash pers. obs.	BM	a
e	10.v.1979	Saad-al-Din Is	2 seen	Ash 1983	—	b
f	2.v.1980	Alula	6 seen	Ash & Miskell pers. obs.	—	b
g	3.v.1980	Alula	Common	Ash & Miskell pers. obs.	—	b
h	5.v.1980	Alula	2♀♀ coll.	Ash & Miskell pers. obs.	SI	b
i	8.v.1980	Garas wadi	3 seen	Ash pers. obs.	—	b
SUDAN (coastal records only)						
a	10 & 11.iii.1976	Suakin	8 coll.	Nikolaus pers. obs.	Bonn	b
b	10 & 11.iii.1976	Suakin	2 coll.	Nikolaus pers. obs.	SI	b
c	viii.1981	Suakin	4 coll.	Nikolaus pers. obs.	St.	b
d	iii.1983	Suakin	3 coll.	Nikolaus pers. obs.	St.	b
SAUDI ARABIA						
a	17.iii.1986	Yanbu Al-Sinaiyah	♂♀ coll.	B. S. Meadows pers. obs.	BM	b
b	12.vii.1987	20 km NW of Shuqaia	2 netted	M. C. Jennings pers. obs.	—	b
c	12.vii.1987	15 km NW of Shuqaia	Sev. seen	M. C. Jennings pers. obs.	—	b
NORTH YEMEN						
a	10.vi.1986	1.5 km south of Al'Urj	One seen	M. K. Evans *in litt.*	—	b

Notes. BM = British Museum (Natural History); SI = Smithsonian Institution; Bonn = Alexander Koenig Museum, Bonn; St. = Stuttgart Museum; G = Genoa Museum. *Subsp. refs:* a = *A. b. cinnamomeus*; b = *A. b. avicenniae*. The following identifications are presumed (first column) Ethiopia a; Somalia b,e,i; Saudi Arabia b,c; North Yemen a.

*This was an *Acrocephalus* found with others ('non è raro') in mangroves, and remained unidentified. It was very probably this species. Coordinates for those localities not included in the text are given in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2. Coordinates for localities in Appendix 1 which are not given in the text

Aseita	Somalia	10°27′N,33°42′E	Gilo River	Ethiopia	07°45′N,33°37′E
Bahadu	Ethiopia	10°05′N,40°37′E	Koka	Ethiopia	08°27′N,39°06′E
Bonga	Ethiopia	08°12′N,34°58′E	Massawa	Ethiopia	15°36′N,39°29′E
Dannow	Somalia	01°44′N,44°32′E	Tendaho	Ethiopia	11°41′N,40°57′E
Gambela	Ethiopia	08°15′N,34°38′E	Ubela River	Ethiopia	07°55′N,33°57′E
Garas wadi	Somalia	11°16′N,49°02′E			